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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY YOUTH DEMAND LEADERSHIP CHANGE

REF: DURBAN: 50

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11. (SBU) Summary. Members of the Inkatha Freedom Party Youth Brigade (IFPYB) aggrieved by the recent expulsion of their leaders staged several demonstrations outside the party's headquarters in Durban. Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leaders have called for order and condemned IFPYB calls for party leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi to step down. His leadership may be coming to an end, regardless. End Summary.

Call for New Leadership

12. (U) In the 2009 election, the IFP won only 22.4 percent of the votes in its former stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) (Reftel). The IFPYB in KZN blamed party leaders for the IFP's dismal performance at the polls and immediately called for the removal of current leaders, including Buthelezi. On May 17, the IFP KZN Executive Committee released a press statement accusing certain IFPYB members of 'failing to present their case to the IFP National Council and of inciting an illegal demonstration outside of the party's head office in Ulundi.' As a result of this 'illegal' action, the IFP Executive Committee expelled from the KZN Provincial Executive Committee of the IFPYB its Provincial Chairperson, Deputy Provincial Chairperson, Deputy Provincial Secretary, Provincial Treasurer, Deputy Provincial Treasurer, Provincial Publicity Secretary, and Deputy Provincial Publicity Secretary. Expelled KZN Provincial Chairperson Skhumbuzo Khanyeza insisted to local media that their grievances with the IFP were supported by the majority of IFPYB members and prominent party leaders as well.

13. (U) On August 17, about 100 members of the IFPYB demonstrated outside the party's head office in Durban demanding that their leaders be reinstated and that IFP leadership be changed. Demonstrators carried posters accusing IFP General Secretary Musa Zondi and IFP National Organizer Albert Mncwango of being behind a plot to expel IFPYB leaders. They also carried posters calling for Prince Buthelezi to step down as party leader. Demonstrators heckled Zondi when he tried to address them.

14. (SBU) On August 31, Pol/Econ Officer witnessed from his 31st-floor office window a clash between IFPYB supporters of Zondi and those of IFP National Chairperson Zanele KaMagwaza-Msibi for the position of party president taking place outside of IFP's Durban head office. Police eventually used rubber bullets to disperse the vociferous yet peaceful crowds. Zondi told Pol/Econ Assistant that the IFP is 'disturbed' by the actions of some of its IFPYB members and is calling for calm. In a public statement, Zondi distanced himself and

KaMagwaza-Msibi from the actions of the youth and asked that they stop using his and KaMagwaza-Msibi's name to advance their political interests - an assertion that was repeated at a press conference by both on October 8. On September 2, IFPYB National Chairperson Patricia Lebenya-Ntazi issued a press statement condemning the anti-Buthlezi statements that were made during the August protest. 'Prince Buthlezi was democratically elected in 2004 as President of the party for a full five year term, a mandate which has not yet expired,' she said.

Buthlezi Undecided

15. (SBU) Buthlezi is shocked by the recent actions of members of the IFPYB, according to independent political analyst Protas Madlala. Addressing students at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), the Prince castigated those causing rifts in the party and said they do not respect the IFP and its constitution. He added that it was up to MUT students to protect and defend his legacy. Madlala argues that Buthlezi is still accessing his options but is likely to fight to keep his position. When asked by local media if he planned to step down as IFP president, the lusty 83-year-old retorted, 'When you look at me, do I look like I'm ready for the rocking chair?'

IFP Elections and the Next Party Leader

16. (SBU) The current IFP leadership's term of service expired at the end of September 2009. However, according to the IFP constitution, leaders must remain in office until a general conference is held and new leaders elected. Although a date has not been set, Lebenya-Ntazi told Pol/Econ officer on September 14 that leaders plan to hold elections before the end of the year. Lebenya-Ntazi subsequently told Pol/Econ Assistant that the conference is likely to be held in January 2010. Expelled youth leader Irvin Barnes has accused the current leadership of trying to cling to power by postponing the General Conference. Secretary General Zondi denied these

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allegations and told local media that the delay is a result of not all party branches being ready for the conference.

17. (SBU) KaMagwaza-Msibi and Zondi are the two most likely IFP leaders to succeed Buthlezi. They both, however, continue to distance themselves from IFP supporters who have called for their election as the next party president. Indeed, when asked by local media on October 8 whether they would run against the Prince at the next IFP National Conference, both KaMagwaza-Msibi and Zondi said, 'No.'

18. (SBU) KaMagwaza-Msibi is a strong contender and is supported by many IFPYB members and the IFP Women's Brigade. She has a track record of service delivery as a mayor of a large rural district where the IFP continues to get more than 90% electoral support. She showed herself during the campaign to be a skilled and influential politician and tireless champion of the IFP. However, she will face strong objections from the key party constituency, the traditional leaders and conservatives who will have difficulty being led by a woman. KaMagwaza-Msibi also appears to have lost the support of Buthlezi because of rumors that she is behind the youth revolt in the party.

19. (SBU) Zondi also enjoys support from members of the IFPYB and appears to still have the ear of Buthlezi. Zondi as the Secretary General of the party has control over local party structures and this might work in his favor. However, he is seen by many IFP members as too rooted in the past; too intellectual; and as having no vision for the party's future.

Comment

11. (SBU) The IFP is facing its first internal revolt since its inception in 1975. Buthlezi's leadership is being challenged openly for the first time as well. Contacts of Pol/Econ Assistant indicate that there is growing mistrust among IFP

leaders especially between Buthelezi and KaMagwaza-Msibi and between Zondi and KaMagwaza-Msibi. While Buthelezi has always managed to retain his position in the party without difficulty, it seems this time around it is going to be a hard battle between the conservatives and the reformists in the party. The writing on the wall is clear, and Buthelezi may decide to avoid a humiliating loss and not stand for office. It still remains unclear, however, who the Prince would support if he were to step aside. His choice will likely determine the future of his beloved party - and his legacy.

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